

Earth Day Message from the Chief of Engineers

It's April 22, and today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers joins our great nation in celebrating Earth Day 2003.

All of you work very hard every day to support the environment. Throughout the year you have been learning about, understanding and putting into practice our Environmental Operating Principles. I'm very proud of all you have been doing to ensure that environmental considerations are part of everything we do.

Earlier this year we recognized several districts as we presented the first Lt. Gen. Frederick J. Clarke Award for Leadership in Environmental Sustainability. Jacksonville District won the first district award. Three districts - Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo - received a special award for submitting a joint program management plan to implement the Environmental Operating Principles regionally within the Great Lakes. We also selected a division winner and will present that award at an upcoming division commanders' meeting.

Next week, we focus our attention on the environment as many of you will gather in Fort Worth for our Environment and Natural Resources Conference. The principles and how we've been implementing them will be the conference's theme. We expect there will be a great many lessons learned and lessons to share as we focus on our environmental stewardship mission.

But today, we're focusing on taking care of our Earth. We may celebrate Earth Day only one day a year, but environmental responsibility is more than a one-day event. We must make, and have made, a daily commitment to the stewardship of the public resources entrusted to our care. While much of the world's attention is focused on Operation Iraqi Freedom, I find the Army's Earth Day of "Preserving the Environment While Protecting Our Freedom" to be very appropriate. As Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki states in his Earth Day message: "This twofold message is simple to remember; it recognizes the value of our training lands to our readiness; and it reminds us of our commitment to Americans everywhere. No matter what the endeavor - whether defending our freedom or protecting the environment - The Army will not fail."

Looking at the Earth Day activities and events being sponsored by the Corps, it's very apparent that we believe Earth Day is much more than a one-day celebration. Our districts have been participating in various activities for the past several weeks and some will continue to celebrate environmental stewardship throughout the month of May. Visit the Earth Day Web Site at www.EarthDay.gov to see not only what our districts are doing, but also the activities of numerous other federal and defense agencies. You will find that Corps employees are

planting trees, educating our youth on the importance of taking care of the environment, picking up litter and trash from waterways and wetlands, creating new hiking trails, etc. The list goes on and on, but the one constant is that the Corps family is out there doing what's right for the environment.

I applaud you for all you do to take care of the environment, not only for our enjoyment and use, but for our children and grandchildren as well. Essayons!

Bob Flowers